

HUMAN RIGHTS HERE AND NOW

Addressing Contemporary Human Rights Issues

FOR EVERY CHILD, EVERY RIGHT! A TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS



Thirty years ago world leaders adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)¹ an international agreement on childhood. Now the most ratified of all international treaties, this historic commitment to the world's children has radically transformed young lives across the globe. It sets out the rights that must be realized for children to develop to their full potential.

The Children's Convention offers a vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development, as well as special needs. Children are neither their parents' property nor passive recipients of adult protection. From

birth children are equal members of the human family and the subject of their own rights, which must be realized for them to develop to their full potential.

As a legally binding treaty, the CRC establishes standards that the governments that ratify it are committed to uphold. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, a body created to monitor the CRC, has established a systematic process for gathering and responding to reports from UN member states concerning their progress towards meeting the standards set forth in the convention. It also offers expert understandings on how the CRC is to be interpreted and implemented. Learn more at ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crc/.



CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE CRC

1. **Nondiscrimination** on any grounds (Article 2);
2. **Protection - the Child's Best Interest:** Enables systems to protect children from abuse or infringement on their rights, including the right to legal representation (Article 3);
3. **Provision:** Affirms the obligation of the State to ensure the child's survival and development, including rights to adequate housing, food, and education (Articles 6+);
4. **Participation:** Guarantees the child's right to express views and be taken seriously (Articles 12 and 13);
5. **Primacy of the role, authority, and responsibility and Family** (Articles 5, 7, 18);
6. **Evolving Capacity:** Acknowledges that as children mature, they need less protection and a greater capacity to take responsibility for decisions affecting their lives. (Article 5).

THE CRC CHANGES CHILDREN'S LIVES

The CRC establishes international recognition of the dignity of every child and standards for how governments are to fulfill, protect, and respect children's human rights. It has inspired governments to change laws and policies and make investments so that more children get the health care and nutrition they need to survive and develop, and there are stronger safeguards in place to protect children from violence and exploitation. It has also enabled more children to have their voices heard and participate in their societies. The lives of millions of children have been improved as a direct result of the CRC.

1. For the full text of the CRC see <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>. For a student-friendly text see <https://static.unicef.org/right-site/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>.

WHY CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?

The actions, or inactions, of government impact children more strongly than any other group in society:

Policymaking that fails to take children into account has a negative impact on the future of all members of society.

Many changes in society are having a disproportionate, and often negative, impact on children: Transformation of the family structure, globalization, climate change, digitalization, mass migration, shifting employment patterns, and a shrinking social welfare net in many countries all have strong impacts on children, especially armed conflict and other emergencies.

Children's needs and views should be heard and considered in the political process: Without special attention to the opinions of children – as expressed at home and in schools, in local communities and even in governments – children's views go unheard on the many important issues that affect them now or will affect them in the future.

The healthy development of children is crucial to the future well being of any society: Because children are especially vulnerable, the effects of disease, malnutrition, and poverty threaten the future of children and therefore the future of the societies in which they live.

The costs to society for failing its children are huge: Children's earliest experiences significantly influence their future development. The course of their development determines their contribution, or cost, to society over the course of their lives.

CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW THEIR RIGHTS. SO DO PARENTS & TEACHERS!

The fifty-four articles in the CRC constitute the broadest set of international human rights standards ever developed for children. As evidence of its worldwide significance, only one world governments had not ratified the CRC: the United States of America. For this reason, most Americans are unfamiliar with this most recognized of all UN human rights documents.

Child rights have not changed since 1989 - they have no expiry date. But childhood has changed. The rise of digital technology, environmental changes, and mass migration are creating new threats, as well as new opportunities, for children to realize their rights.

FREE CRC TOOLKIT

In honor of the 30th Anniversary, HRE USA has created *Every Child, Every Right!* - an online curated resource to help anyone learn and teach about the CRC!

hreusa.org/every-child-every-right/

EVERY CHILD, EVERY RIGHT



Resource Kit to Teach & Learn about the CRC

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Take the Human Rights Temperature of your School Community to stimulates curiosity about children's rights <http://wayback.archive-it.org/7893/20180722212240/http://hrusa.org/thisismyhome/project/toolkitlist.shtml>
- Celebrate UN Children's Day on November 20 - the 30th Anniversary of the CRC. Download the UNICEF CRC30 Toolkit: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VmNuowMt6KWmk6LD-vbBKu3GxscWFp_uBuvxp8-p700/pub
- Plan a teach-in for your faculty or community. See resources for adult learners at: <https://hreusa.org/every-child-every-right/>